

**IN THE SPECIFICATION:**

After the title, please add the following:

**--CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

This patent application is a continuation of U.S. Application Serial No. 08/762,358, filed on December 9, 1996, by William R. Fiehler, now U.S. patent No. 6,238,578 issued on May 29, 2001, which claims priority from U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/008,524 filed December 12, 1995, the entire contents of each of these applications being incorporated by reference herein.--

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended)      A blood collection apparatus comprising:
  - a blood collection tube defining an inner surface and an end; and
  - a gel being selectively disposed along the inner surface relative to the end based on at least one dimension of the blood collection tube and a volume of a blood sample being collected.
  
4. (Amended)      A blood collection apparatus comprising:
  - a blood collection tube defining a central inner surface and an end; and
  - a gel disposed along a portion of the central inner surface, the portion of the central inner surface defining a predetermined first limit and a predetermined second limit relative to the end, the limits being predetermined based on at least one dimension of the blood collection tube and a volume of a blood sample being collected.